

John Ashcroft — The Best Man For the Job

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The following are recent quotes on President-Elect Bush's nomination of Senator John Ashcroft for the office of U.S. Attorney General.

“ ‘Throughout Sen. Ashcroft's years of service as Missouri's Attorney General, Governor and United States Senator, he has demonstrated a strong commitment to law enforcement and pledged to involve the Fraternal Order of Police in all aspects of America's criminal justice policy as we enter the next millennium. It is this willingness to listen to the concerns of law enforcement officers that earns Senator Ashcroft our support. ...

“ ... ‘His commitment to law enforcement and their families is very real.’ ”

(Gilbert G. Gallegos, national president of the Fraternal Order of Police; U.S. Newswire; 1/12/01)

"Quite the contrary. I think that John Ashcroft is color-blind. That's one of the good things that comes from his religious belief. He has never given any indication that he is anything other than color-blind."

(Former Nebraska Sen. Bob Kerrey, on whether he supports the allegations of racism; The Edge, FNC; 1/11)

“ ‘While his views on abortion, support for school vouchers and school prayer may not be popular with liberals, for tens of millions of Americans, they represent deeply held convictions and are hardly outside the mainstream,’ said Janet Parshall, spokeswoman for the Family Research Council. [...]

“Roberta Roper, a registered Democrat in Maryland who is co-chairwoman of the National Victims Constitutional Amendment Network, said partisanship ought not to play a role in the nomination.

“ ‘I'm here to say this isn't about politics, this is about doing what's right,’ Mrs. Roper said. ‘John Ashcroft cares about crime victims and should be confirmed.’ ”

(The Washington Times, 1/12/01)

“Now we are seeing the beginnings of a new Borking against Sen. John Ashcroft, President-elect George W. Bush's nominee for attorney general. The same liberal groups have become apoplectic. How dare a conservative president nominate a conservative attorney general? Sen.

John Kerry (D-Mass.) whined that Ashcroft was 'a divisive, not unifying nomination,' even though Bush 'has said he is a uniter not a divider.' Kerry, oddly, was not nearly so upset by Clinton's lefty picks eight years ago, even though Clinton, who received a far lower percentage of the vote in 1992 than Bush did in 2000, should have felt an even greater need to unite the country.

"The first step in a Borking is to hint that someone is a racist (par for the course for liberals, for whom a 'bigot' is a conservative who is winning an argument with a liberal). Ashcroft, we learn, convinced his Senate colleagues to vote against a black Missouri judge's appointment to the federal bench. Clearly, the groups say, a case of racism.

"But if Ashcroft is a racist, he's a pretty bad one, having voted to confirm 90 percent of the black judicial nominees that came before him. And if voting against a black judge makes one a racist, there are 48 current and former senators, including Al Gore, who have some explaining to do for their votes against Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas."

(Laura Vanderkam, The Daily Princetonian, 1/10/01)

"And 14 conservative-leaning women's groups rallied to Ashcroft's defense Thursday at a marathon news conference. ...

" 'John Ashcroft understands that it is the role of government to protect the innocent and punish the guilty,' said Beverly LaHaye, chairwoman of Concerned Women for America.

"Lori Cole of the Eagle Forum, a group headed by conservative activist Phyllis Schlafly, said: 'Perhaps the left fears an attorney general that can't be bought with sex or money.'

"The groups defended Ashcroft's record on civil rights, noting that he has appointed blacks to judgeships, voted for their appointments to the federal bench and that recently he co-chaired a hearing on racial profiling, which he decried."

(Los Angeles Times, 1/12/01)

"[W]hat's out of the mainstream here is the notion that you can sabotage and sink a Cabinet nomination purely on policy grounds. [...]

"To ... say just because of someone's views on an issue that happened to be in comportment with the president, that's -- that's out of the mainstream in and of itself. And I think they have an uphill battle -- one thing I've been struck by is the difference in tone you get from liberal groups on the outside and those senators who will actually have the voting cards and have to vote on the nomination. There's been -- John Ashcroft is a panda bear. John Ashcroft is a very nice man. He made very good friendships across the aisle in the Senate when he served there. As an attorney general and as a governor in Missouri, he rose to the top of his profession, became head of the National Association ... of Attorney Generals and head of the NGA, the National Governors Association. He is a very qualified man, maybe about as qualified as we've ever had for attorney general. [...]

"[President-elect Bush] ought to be able to appoint people who reflect his ideas. John Ashcroft is really in the mainstream here, The policy argument doesn't fly."

(Heritage Foundation's Michael Franc, CNN Burden of Proof, 1/10/01)

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